# A DISSERTATION ON THE POLITICAL UNION AND CONSTITUTION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES, OF *NORTH-AMERICA:*

Which is neceſſary to their Preſervation and Happineſs, humbly offered to the Public,

By a CITIZEN of PHILADELPHIA.

---

*PHILADELPHIA*

Printed and Sold by T. BRADFORD, in Front-ſtreet, three Doors below the Coffee-Houſe, MDCCLXXXIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

# A DISSERTATION, &c.

I. THE *ſupreme authority of any ſtate muſt have power enough to effect the ends of its appointment,* otherwiſe theſe ends cannot be anſwered, and *effectually ſecured*; at beſt they are precarious---but at the ſame time,

II. The ſupreme authority ought to be *ſo limited and checked,* if poſſible as to prevent the *abuſe of power, or the exerciſe of powers that are not neceſſary to the ends of its appointment,* but hurtful and oppreſſive to the ſubject---but to limit a ſupreme authority ſo far as to diminiſh its dignity, or leſſen its power of doing good, would be to deſtroy or at leaſt to corrupt it, and render it *ineffectual* to its ends.

III. A number of ſovereign ſtates uniting into one commonwealth, and appointing a ſupreme power to manage the affairs of the union, *do neceſſarily and unavoidably part with and transfer over to ſuch ſupreme power, ſo much of their own ſovereignty, as is neceſſary to render the ends of the union effectual,*

*fectual*, otherwiſe their confederation will be a union without bands of union, like a caſk without hoops, that may and probably will fall to pieces, as ſoon as 'tis put to any exerciſe which requires ſtrength---Juſt ſo every member of civil ſociety parts with many of his natural rights, that he may enjoy the reſt in greater ſecurity under the protection of ſociety. The union of the Thirteen States of America is of mighty conſequence to the ſecurity, ſovereignty and even liberty of each of them, and of all the individuals who compoſe them; united under a natural well adjuſted and effectual conſtitution, they are a ſtrong, rich, growing power, with great reſources and means of defence, which no foreign power will eaſily attempt to invade or inſult; they may eaſily command reſpect, and as their exports are moſtly either raw materials or proviſions, and their imports moſtly finiſhed goods, their trade becomes a capital object with every manufacturing nation of Europe, and all the ſouthern colonies of America, their friendſhip and trade will of courſe be courted, and each power in amity with them will contribute to their ſecurity; their union is of great moment in another reſpect, they thereby form a ſuperintending power among themſelves, that can moderate and terminate diſputes that may ariſe between different ſtates, without having recourſe to the dreadful deciſion

ſion of the ſword.---I don't mean here to go into a detail of all the advantages of our union, they offer themſelves on every view and are important enough to engage every honeſt prudent mind, to ſecure and eſtabliſh that union by every poſſible method, that we may enjoy the full benefit of it, and be rendered happy and ſafe under the protection it affords.

This union, however important, cannot be ſupported without a conſtitution founded on principles of natural truth, fitneſs and utility. If there is one article wrong in ſuch conſtitution, it will diſcover itſelf in practice, by its baleful operation, and deſtroy or at leaſt injure the union. Many nations have been ruined by the errors of their political conſtitutions. Such errors firſt introduce wrongs and injuries which ſoon breed diſcontents, which gradually work up into mortal hatred and reſentments, inveterate parties are formed, which of courſe make the whole community a houſe divided againſt itſelf, which ſoon falls either a prey to ſome enemies without, who watch to devour them, or elſe crumble into their original conſtituent parts, and looſe all reſpectability, ſtrength and ſecurity. 'Tis as phyſically impoſſible to ſecure to civil ſociety, good cement of union, duration and ſecurity, without a conſtitution founded on principles of natural fitneſs and right, as to raiſe timbers into a ſtrong compact building, which have

have not been framed upon true geometrick principles, for if you cut one beam a foot too long or too ſhort, not all the authority and all the force of all the carpenters can ever get it into its place, and make it fit in with proper ſimmetry there. As the fate then of all governments depends much on their political conſtitutions, they become an object of mighty moment to the happineſs and well-being of ſociety; and as the framing of ſuch a conſtitution requires great knowledge of the rights of men and ſocieties, as well as of the intereſts, circumſtances and even prejudices of the ſeveral parts of the community or commonwealth, for which it is intended; it becomes a very complex ſubject, and of courſe requires great ſteadineſs and comprehenſion of thought, as well as great knowledge of men and things to do it properly. I ſhall however attempt it with my beſt abilities, and hope from the candor of the public to eſcape cenſure, if I cannot merit praiſe.

I BEGIN with my firſt and great principle, viz. *That the conſtitution muſt veſt powers in every department ſufficient to ſecure and make effectual the the ends of it.* The ſupreme authority muſt have the power of making war and peace---of appointing armies and navies---of appointing officers both civil and military---of making contracts---of emitting, coining and borrowing money---

of regulating trade and making treaties with foreign powers---of eſtabliſhing poſt-offices---- and in ſhort of doing every thing which the well-being of the commonwealth may require, and which is not compatible to any particular ſtate, all of which require money, and can't poſſibly be made effectual without it, they muſt therefore of neceſſity be veſted with *a power of taxation.* I know this is a moſt important and weighty truſt, a dreadful engine of oppreſſion, tyranny and injury, when ill uſed; yet from the neceſſity of the caſe, it muſt be admitted, for to give a ſupreme authority a power of making contracts without any power of payment---of appointing officers civil and military, without money to pay them---a power to build ſhips, without any money to do it with---a power of emitting money, without any power to redeem it---or of borrowing money without any power to make payment, &c. &c. Such a ſoleciſm in goverment, is ſo naturally abſurd, that I really think to offer further arguments on the ſubject, would be to inſult the underſtanding of my readers---to make all theſe payments dependent on the votes of thirteen popular aſſemblies, who will undertake to judge of the propriety of every contract, and every occaſion of money, and grant or withhold ſupplies according to their opinon, and at the ſame time, the operations of the whole Thirteen, ſtopped

by

the vote of a ſingle one of them; I ſay this renders all ſupplies ſo precarious, and the public credit ſo extremely uncertain, as muſt in its nature render all efforts in war, and all regular adminiſtration in peace, utterly impracticable, as well as moſt pointedly ridiculous. Is there a man to be found, who would lend money or render perſonal ſervices, or make contracts on ſuch precarious ſecurity; indeed we have a proof of fact, the ſtrongeſt of all proofs, a fatal experience - the ſureſt though ſevereſt of all ſchoolmaſters, which renders all other proof or arguments on this ſubject quite unneceſſary---the preſent broken ſtate of our finances---public debts and bankruptcies---enormous and ridiculous depreciation of public ſecurities, with the total annihilation of our public credit,---prove beyond all contradiction the vanity of all recourſe to the ſeveral aſſemblies of the ſtates. The recent inſtance of the duty of five per cent on imported goods ſtruck dead, and the bankruptcies which enſued on the ſingle vote of Rhode-Iſland, affords another proof, of what 'tis certain may be done again in like circumſtances.

I have another reaſon why a power of taxation or of raiſing money, ought to be veſted in the ſupreme authority of our commonwealth, viz. the monies neceſſary for the public ought to be raiſed by a duty impoſed on imported goods,

goods, not a bare five per cent or any other per cent on all imported goods indiſcriminately, but a duty much heavier on all articles of luxury or mere ornament, and which are conſumed principally by the rich or prodigal part of the community, ſuch as ſilks of all ſorts, muſlins, cambricks, lawns, ſuperfine cloths, ſpirits, wines, &c. &c. Such an impoſt would eaſe the huſbandman, the mechanic and the poor, would have all the practical effects of a ſumptuary law, would mend the œconomy and increaſe the induſtry of the community, would be collected without the ſhocking circumſtances of collectors and their warrants, and make the quantity of tax paid allways, depend on the choice of the perſon who pays it.

This tax can be laid by the ſupreme authority much more conveniently than by the particular aſſemblies, and would in no caſe be ſubject to their repeals or modifications, and of courſe the public credit would never be dependent on or liable to bankruptcy by the humours of any particular aſſembly,---in an eſſay on finance, which I deſign ſoon to offer to the public, this ſubject will be treated more fully.

The delegates which are to form that auguſt body, which are to hold and exerciſe the ſupreme authority, ought to be appointed by the ſtates in any manner they pleaſe in which they ſhould not be limited by any reſtrictions; their

dignity and the weight they will hold in the great public councils, will always depend on the abilities of the perſons they appoint to repreſent them there; and if they are wiſe enough to chooſe men of ſufficient abilities, and reſpectable characters, men of ſound ſenſe, extenſive knowledge, gravity and integrity, they will reap the honor and advantage of ſuch wiſdom; but if they are fools enough to appoint men of trifling or vile characters, of mean abilities, faulty morals or deſpicable ignorance, they muſt reap the fruits of ſuch folly, and content themſelves to have no weight, dignity or eſteem in the public councils; and what is more to be lamented by the commonwealth, to do no good there. I have no objection to the ſtates electing and recalling their delegates as often as they pleaſe, but think it hard and very injurious both to them and the commonwealth, that they ſhould be obliged to diſcontinue them after three years ſervice, if they find them on that tryal to be men of ſufficient integrity and abilities; a man of that experience is certainly much more qualified to ſerve in the place, than a new member of equal good character can be; experience makes perfect in every kind of buſineſs---old experienced ſtateſmen, of tried and approved integrity and abilities, are a great bleſſing to a ſtate---they acquire great authority and eſteem as well as wiſdom, and very much

much contribute to keep the ſyſtem of government in good and ſalutary order; and this furniſhes the ſtrongeſt reaſon why they ſhould be continued in the ſervice, on Plato's great maxim, that the man beſt qualified to ſerve ought to be appointed---I am ſorry to ſee a contrary maxim adopted in our American councils, to make the higheſt reaſon that can be given for continuing a man in the public adminiſtration, aſſigned as a conſtitutional and abſolute reaſon for turning him out, ſeems to me to be a ſoleciſm of a piece with many other reforms, by which we ſet out to ſurprize the world with our wiſdom. If we ſhould adopt this maxim in the common affairs of life, it would be found inconvenient, e. g. if we ſhould make it a part of our conſtitution, that a man who has ſerved a three years apprentiſhip to the trade of a taylor or ſhoemaker, ſhould be obliged to diſcontinue that buſineſs for the three ſucceſſive years, I am of opinion the country would ſoon be cleared of good ſhoemakers and taylors.---Men are no more born ſtateſmen than ſhoemakers or taylors---Experience is equally neceſſary to perfection in both. It ſeems to me that a man's inducements to qualify himſelf for a public employment, and make himſelf maſter of it, muſt be much diſcouraged by this conſideration, that let him take whatever pains to qualify himſelf in the beſt manner, he muſt be ſhortly turned out, and

of

of courſe it would be of more conſequence to him, to turn his attention to ſome other buſineſs which he might adopt when his preſent appointment ſhould expire; and by this means the commonwealth is in danger of loſing the zeal, induſtry, and ſhining abilities, as well as ſervices of their moſt accompliſhed and valuable men. I hear that the ſtate of Georgia has improved on this bleſſed principle, and limited the continuance of their governors to one year; the conſequence is, they have already the ghoſts of departed governors ſtalking about in every part of their ſtate, and growing more plenty every year, and as the price of every thing is reduced by its plenty, I can ſuppoſe governors will ſoon be very low there.---This doctrine of rotation was firſt propoſed by ſome ſprightly geniuſes of brilliant politics, with this cogent reaſon, that by introducing a rotation in the public offices, we ſhould have a great number of men trained up to public ſervice; but it appears to me that it will be more likely to produce many jacks at all trades, but good at none. I think that frequent elections are a ſufficient ſecurity againſt the continuance of men in public office whoſe conduct is not approved, and there can be no reaſon for excluding thoſe whoſe conduct is approved, and are allowed to be better qualified than any men who can be found to ſupply their places.

Another

Another great object of government, is the apportionment of burdens and benefits, for if a greater quota of burden or a leſs quota of benefit than is juſt and right be allotted to any ſtate, this ill apportionment will be an everlaſting ſource of uneaſineſs and diſcontent. In the firſt caſe, the over-burdened ſtate will complain, in the laſt caſe all the ſtates, whoſe quota of benefits is underated will be uneaſy; and this is a caſe of ſuch delicacy, that it cannot be ſafely truſted to the arbitrary opinion or judgement of any body of men however auguſt. Some natural principle of confeſſed equity, and which can be reduced to a certainty, ought if poſſible to be found and adopted, for it is of the higheſt moment to the commonwealth, to obviate, and if poſſible, wholly to take away ſuch a fruitful and common ſource of infinite diſputes, as that of apportionment of quotas has ever proved in all ſtates of the earth.---The value of lands may be a good rule, but the aſcertainment of that value is impracticable; no aſſeſſment can be made which will not be liable to exception and debate---to adopt a good rule in any thing which is impracticable, is abſurd, for 'tis phyſically impoſſible that any thing ſhould be good for practice, which can't be practiſed at all;---but if the value of lands were capable of certain aſſeſſment; yet to adopt that value as a rule of apportionment of quotas, and at the

ſame time to except from valuation large tracts of ſundry ſtates of immenſe value, which have all been defended by the joint arms of the whole empire, and for the defence of which no additional quota of ſupply is to be demanded of thoſe ſtates to whom ſuch lands are ſecured by ſuch joint efforts of the ſtates, is in its nature unreaſonable, and will open a door for great complaint; 'tis plain without argument, that ſuch ſtates ought either to make grants to the commonwealth of ſuch tracts of defended territory, or ſell as much of it as will pay its proper quota of defence, and pay ſuch ſums into the public treaſury; and this ought to be done, let what rule of quota ſoever, be adopted with reſpect to the cultivated part of the united ſtates, for no propoſition of natural right and juſtice can be plainer than this, that every part of valuable property which is defended, ought to contribute its quota of ſupply for that defence. If then the value of cultivated lands is found to be an impracticable rule of apportionment of quotas, we have to ſeek for ſome other, equally juſt and leſs exceptionable. It appears to me, that the number of living ſouls or human perſons of whatever age, ſex or condition, will afford us a rule or meaſure of apportionment which will forever increaſe and decreaſe with the real wealth of the ſtates, and will of courſe be a perpetual rule not capable of corruption, by

by any circumſtances of future time, which is of vaſt conſideration in forming a conſtitution which is deſigned for perpetual duration, and which will in its nature be as juſt as to the inhabited parts of each ſtate, as that of the value of lands or any other that has or can be mentioned.---Land takes its value not merely from the goodneſs of its ſoil, but from innumerable other relative advantages, among which the population of the country may be conſidered as principal, as lands in a full ſettled country will always (*cæteris paribus*) bring more than lands in thin ſettlements---On this principle, when the inhabitants of Ruſſia, Poland, &c. ſell real eſtates, they do not value them as we do, by the number of acres, but by the number of people who live on them,---Where any piece of land has many advantages, many people will croud there to obtain them, which will create many competitors for the purchaſe of it, which will of courſe raiſe the price. Where there are fewer advantages, there will be fewer competitors, and of courſe a leſs price; and theſe two things will forever be proportionate to each other, and of courſe the one will always be a ſure index of the other. The only conſiderable objection I have ever heard to this, is, that the quality of inhabitants, differ in the different ſtates, and 'tis not reaſonable that the black ſlaves in the ſouthern ſtates ſhould be eſtimated

on

on a par with the white freemen in the northern ſtates. To diſcuſs this queſtion fairly, I think it will be juſt to eſtimate the neat value of the labor of both, and if it ſhall appear that the labor of the black perſon produces as much neat wealth to the ſouthern ſtate, as the labor of the white perſon does to the northward ſtate, I think it will follow plainly, that they are equally uſeful inhabitants in point of wealth; and therefore in the caſe before us, ſhould be eſtimated alike,----and if the amazing profits which the ſouthern planters boaſt of receiving from the labor of their ſlaves on their plantations are true, the ſouthern people have greatly the advantage in this kind of eſtimation, and as this objection comes principally from the ſouthward, I ſhould ſuppoſe that the gentlemen from that part will bluſh to urge it any further.

That the ſupreme authority ſhould be veſted with powers to terminate and finally decide controverſies ariſing between different ſtates, I take it, will be univerſally admitted, but I humbly apprehend that an appeal from the firſt inſtance of tryal ought to be admitted in cauſes of great moment, on the ſame reaſons that ſuch appeals are admitted in all the ſtates of Europe. It is well known to all men verſed in courts, that the firſt hearing of a cauſe, rather gives an opening to that evidence, and reaſon which ought to decide it, than ſuch a full examination

and

and thorough diſcuſſion, as ſhould always precede a final judgment, in cauſes of national conſequence.---A detail of reaſons might be added, which I deem it unneceſſary to enlarge on here.

The ſupreme authority ought to have a power of peace and war, and forming treaties and alliances with all foreign powers, which implies a neceſſity of their alſo having ſufficient powers to enforce the obedience of all ſubjects of the United States to ſuch treaties and alliances, with full powers to unite the force of the ſtates and direct its operations in war, and to puniſh all tranſgreſſors in all theſe reſpects; otherwiſe by the imprudence of a few, the whole commonwealth may be embroiled with foreign powers, and the operations of war may be rendered uſeleſs, or fail much of their due effect: All theſe I conceive will be eaſily granted, eſpecially the latter, as the power of Congreſs to appoint and direct the army and navy in war, with all departments thereto belonging, and puniſhing delinquents in them all, is already admitted into practice in the courſe of the preſent unhappy war, in which we have been long engaged.

But now the great and moſt difficult part of this weighty ſubject remains to be conſidered, viz. how this ſupreme authority is to be conſtituted in ſuch manner that they may be able to

exerciſe with full force, and effect the vaſt powers committed to them, for the good and well-being of the United States, and yet be ſo checked and reſtrained from exerciſing theſe powers to the injury and ruin of the ſtates, that we may with ſafety truſt them with a commiſſion of ſuch vaſt magnitude;---and may almighty wiſdom direct my pen in this arduous diſcuſſion.

1ſt. The men who compoſe this important council, muſt be delegated from all the ſtates, and it is to be wiſhed that none might be appointed that were not adequate to this weighty buſineſs; but a little knowledge of human nature, and a little acquaintance with the political hiſtory of mankind, will ſoon teach us that this is not to be expected. The repreſentatives appointed by popular elections are commonly not only the legal, but real ſubſtantial repreſentatives of their electors, i. e. there will commonly be about the ſame proportion of grave, ſound, well qualified men,--trifling deſultory men,---wild or knaviſh ſchemers,---and dull ignorant fools in the delegated aſſembly, as in the the body of electors. I know of no way to help this, and ſuch delegates muſt be admitted, as the ſtates are pleaſed to ſend; and all that can be done, is when they get together, to make the beſt of them. We will ſuppoſe then they are all met in Congreſs, clothed with that vaſt authority which it is neceſſary to the well-being

being, and even exiſtence of the union that they ſhould be veſted with, how ſhall we impower them to do all neceſſary and effectual good, and reſtrain them from doing hurt? To do this properly, I think we muſt recur to thoſe natural motives of action, thoſe feelings and apprehenſions which uſually occur to the mind at the very time of action; for diſtant conſequences, however weighty, are often too much diſregarded. *Truth loves light, and is vindicated by it. Wrong ſhrouds itſelf in darkneſs, and is ſupported by deluſion.* An honeſt well qualified man loves light, can bear cloſe examination and critical enquiry, and is beſt pleaſed when he is moſt thoroughly underſtood: A man of corrupt deſign, or a fool of no deſign, hates cloſe examination and critical enquiry; the knavery of the one and the ignorance of the other is diſcovered by it, and they both uſually grow uneaſy, before the inveſtigation is half done. I don't believe there is a more natural truth in the world, than that divine one of our ſaviour, *he that doth truth, cometh to the light.* I would therefore recommend that mode of deliberation, which ſhould naturaliy bring on the moſt thorough and critical diſcuſſion of the ſubject, previous to paſſing the act; and for that purpoſe humbly propoſe,

2dly, That the Congreſs ſhall conſiſt of two chambers, an upper and lower houſe, or ſenate and

and commons, with the concurrence of both neceſſary to every act, and that every ſtate ſend one or more delegates to each houſe; this will ſubject every act to two diſcuſſions before two diſtinct chambers of men equally qualified for the debate---equally maſters of the ſubject, and of equal authority in the deciſion.---Theſe two houſes will be be governed by the ſame natural motives and intereſts, viz. the good of the commonwealth and the approbation of the people. Whilſt at the ſame time the emulation naturally ariſing between them, will induce a very critical and ſharp-ſighted inſpection into the motions of each other. Their different opinions will bring on conferences between the two houſes, in which the whole ſubject will be exhauſted in arguments pro and con, and ſhame will be the portion of obſtinate convicted error. Under theſe circumſtances, a man of ignorance or evil deſign will be afraid to impoſe on the credulity, inattention or confidence of his houſe, by introducing any corrupt or indigeſted propoſition which he knows he muſt be called on to defend, againſt the ſevere ſcrutiny, and poignant objections of the other houſe. I do not believe the many hurtful and fooliſh legiſlative acts which firſt or laſt have injured all the ſtates on earth, have originated ſo much in corruption as indolence, ignorance, and a want of a full comprehenſion of the ſubject, which a full prying

prying and emulous diſcuſſion would tend in a great meaſure to remove: This naturally rouſes the lazy and idle, who hate the pain of cloſe thinking, animates the ambitious to excel in policy and argument, and excites the whole to ſupport the dignity of their houſe, and vindicate their own propoſitions. I am not of opinion that bodies of elective men, which uſually compoſe parliaments, diets, aſſemblies, congreſſes, &c. are commonly diſhoneſt; but I believe it rarely happens that there are not deſigning men among them, and I think it would be much more difficult for them to unite their partizans in two houſes and corrupt or deceive them both, than to carry on their deſigns where there is but one unalarmed, unapprehenſive houſe to be managed; and as there is no hope of making theſe bad men good, the beſt policy is to embarraſs them, and make their work as difficult as poſſible---In theſe aſſemblies are frequently to be found ſanguine men, upright enough indeed, but of ſtrong wild projection, whoſe brains are always teeming with utopian, chimerical plans and political whims, very deſtructive to ſociety. I hardly know a greater evil than to have the ſupreme councils of a nation played off on ſuch mens wires; ſuch baſeleſs viſions at beſt end in darkneſs, and the dance, though eaſy and merry enough at firſt, rarely fails to plunge the credulous ſimple followers into ſloughs and bogs

bogs at laſt. Nothing can tend more effectually to obviate theſe evils, and to mortify and cure ſuch magotty brains, than to ſee the abſurdity of their projects expoſed, by the ſeveral arguments and keen ſatire which a full, emulous and ſpirited diſcuſſion of the ſubject will naturally produce: We have had enough of theſe geniuſes in the ſhort courſe of our politics, both in our national and provincial councils, and have felt enough of their evil effects to induce us to wiſh for any good method to keep ourſelves clear of them in future.

The conſultations and deciſions of national councils are ſo very important, that the fate of millions depends on them; therefore no man ought to ſpeak in ſuch aſſemblies, without conſidering that the fate of millions hangs on his tongue,---and of courſe a man can have no right in ſuch auguſt councils to utter indigeſted ſentiments, or indulge himſelf in ſudden unexamined flights of thought; his moſt tried and improved abilities are due to the ſtate, who have truſted him with their moſt important intereſts. A man muſt therefore be moſt inexcuſable, who is either abſent during ſuch debates, or ſleeps, or whiſpers, or catches flies during the argument, and juſt rouſes when the vote is called to give his yea or nay, to the weal or woe of a nation.---Therefore 'tis manifeſtly proper, that every natural motive that can operate on his underſtanding

underſtanding, or his paſſions, to engage his attention and utmoſt efforts, ſhould be put in practice, and that his preſent feelings ſhould be raiſed by every motive of honor and ſhame, to ſtimulate him to every practicable degree of diligence and exertion, to be as far as poſſible uſeful in the great diſcuſſion.---I appeal to the feelings of every reader, if he would not (were he in either houſe) be much more ſtrongly and naturally induced to exert his utmoſt abilities and attention to any queſtion which was to paſs through the ordeal of a ſpirited diſcuſſion of another houſe, than he would do, if the abſolute deciſion depended on his own houſe, without any further enquiry or challenge on the ſubject.

As Congreſs will ever be compoſed of men delegated by the ſeveral ſtates, it may well be ſuppoſed that they have the confidence of their ſeveral ſtates, and underſtand well the policy and preſent condition of them; it may alſo be ſuppoſed that they come with ſtrong local attachments, and habits of thinking limited to the intereſts of their particular ſtates: It may therefore be ſuppoſed they will need much information, in order to their gaining that enlargement of ideas, and great comprehenſion of thought which will be neceſſary to enable them to think properly on that large ſcale, which takes into view the intereſts of all the ſtates:---

The

The greateſt care and wiſdom is therefore requiſite to give them the beſt and ſureſt information, and of that kind that may be moſt ſafely relied on, to prevent their being deluded or prejudiced by partial repreſentations, made by intereſted men who have particular views. This information may perhaps be beſt made by the great miniſters of ſtate, who ought to be men of the greateſt abilities and integrity, their buſineſs is confined to their ſeveral departments, and their attention engaged ſtrongly and conſtantly to all the ſeveral parts of the ſame; the whole arrangement, method and order of which, are formed, ſuperintended, and managed in their offices, and all informations relative to their departments center there; theſe miniſters will of courſe have the beſt information, and moſt perfect knowledge of the ſtate of the nation, as far as it relates to their ſeveral departments, and will of courſe be able to give the beſt information to Congreſs, in what manner any bill propoſed, will affect the public intereſt in their ſeveral departments, which will nearly comprehend the whole. The Financier manages the whole ſubject of revenues and expenditures---the ſecretary of ſtate takes knowledge of the general policy and internal government---the miniſter of war preſides in the whole buſineſs of war and defence---and the miniſter of foreign affairs regards the whole

ſtate

ſtate of the nation, as it ſtands related to or connected with all foreign powers. I mention a ſecretary of ſtate, becauſe all other nations have one, and I ſuppoſe we ſhall need one as much as they, and the multiplicity of affairs which naturally fall into his office will grow ſo faſt, that I imagine we ſhall ſoon be under neceſſity of appointing one---To theſe I would add judges of law, and chancery; but I fear they will not be very ſoon appointed---the one ſuppoſes the exiſtence of law, and the other of equity---and when we ſhall be alltogether convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of the real and effectual exiſtence of both theſe, we ſhall probably appoint proper heads to preſide in thoſe departments. ----I would therefore propoſe,

3dly, That when any bill ſhall paſs the ſecond reading in the houſe in which it originates, and before it ſhall be finally enacted, copies of it ſhall be ſent to each of the ſaid miniſters of ſtate, in being at the time, who ſhall give ſaid houſe in writing, the fulleſt information in their power, and their moſt explicit ſentiments of the operation of the ſaid bill on the public intereſt, as far as relates to their reſpective departments, which ſhall be received and read in ſaid houſe and entered on their minutes, before they finally paſs the bill; and when they ſend the bill for concurrence to the other houſe, they ſhall ſend therewith the ſaid

informations of the ſaid miniſters of ſtate, which ſhall likewiſe be read in that houſe before their concurrence is finally paſſed.---I do not mean to give theſe great miniſters of ſtate a negative on Congreſs, but I mean to oblige Congreſs to receive their advices before they paſs their bills, and that every act ſhall be void that is not paſſed with theſe forms; and I further propoſe, that either houſe of Congreſs may, if they pleaſe, admit the ſaid miniſters to be preſent and aſſiſt in the debates of the houſe, but without any right of vote, in the deciſion.

It appears to me, that if every act ſhall paſs ſo many different corps of diſcuſſion before 'tis compleated, where each of them ſtake their characters on the advice or vote they give, there will be all the light thrown on the caſe, which the nature and circumſtances of it can admit, and any corrupt man will find it extremely difficult to foiſt in any erroneous clauſe whatever; and every ignorant or lazy man will find the ſtrongeſt inducements to make himſelf maſter of the ſubject, that he may appear with ſome tollerable degree of character in it, and the whole will find themſelves in a manner compelled, diligently and ſincerely to ſeek for the real ſtate of the facts, and the natural fitneſs and truth ariſing from them, i. e. the whole natural principles on which the ſubject depends, and which alone can endure every teſt, to the end,

end that they may have not only the inward ſatisfaction of acting properly and uſefully for the ſtates, but alſo the credit and character which is or ought ever to be annexed to ſuch a conduct. This will give the great laws of Congreſs the higheſt probability, preſumption and means of right, fitneſs and truth, that any laws whatever can have at their firſt enaction, and will of courſe afford the higheſt reaſon for the confidence and acquieſcence of the ſtates, and all their ſubjects in them; and being grounded in truth and natural fitneſs, their operation will be eaſy, ſalutary and ſatisfactory---and if experience ſhall diſcover errors in any law (for practice will certainly diſcover ſuch error if there be any) the legiſlature will always be able to correct them, by ſuch repeals, amendments or new laws as ſhall be found neceſſary; but as 'tis much eaſier to prevent miſchiefs than to remedy them, all poſſible caution, prudence and attention ſhould be uſed, to make the laws right at firſt.

4thly. There is another body of men among us whoſe buſineſs of life, and whoſe full and extenſive intelligence, foreign and domeſtic, naturally makes them more perfectly acquainted with the ſources of our wealth, and whoſe particular intereſts are more intimately and neceſſarily connected with the general proſperity of the country, than any other order of men in the ſtates---I mean the *Merchants*; and I could wiſh

wiſh that Congreſs might have the benefit of that extenſive and important information which this body of men are very capable of laying before them.----Trade is of ſuch eſſential importance to our intereſts, and ſo intimately connected with all our ſtaples great and ſmall, that no ſources of our wealth can flouriſh, and operate to the general benefit of the community without it. Our huſbandry, that grand ſtaple of our country, can never exceed our home conſumption without this---'tis plain at firſt ſight, that the farmer will not toil and ſweat through the year to raiſe great plenty of the produce of the ſoil, if there is no market for his produce, when he has it ready for ſale, i. e. if there are no merchants to buy it. In like manner the manufacturer will not lay out his buſineſs on any large ſcale, if there is no merchant to buy his fabricks when he has finiſhed them; a vent is of the moſt eſſential importance to every manufacturing country---the merchants therefore become the natural negociators of the wealth of the country, who take off the abundance and ſupply the wants of the inhabitants;---and as this negociation is the buſineſs of their lives, and the ſource of their own wealth, they of courſe become better acquainted with both our abundance and wants, and are more intereſted in finding and improving the beſt vent for the one, and ſupply of the other, than any other

men

men among us, and they have a natural intereſt in making both the purchaſe and ſupply as convenient to their cuſtomers as poſſible, that they may ſecure their cuſtom, and thereby increaſe their own buſineſs. It follows then, that the merchants are not only qualified to give the fulleſt and moſt important information to our ſupreme legiſlature, concerning the ſtate of our trade---the abundance and wants---the wealth and poverty of our people, i. e. their moſt important intereſts, but are the moſt likely to do it fairly and truly, and to forward with their influence, every meaſure which will operate to the convenience and benefit of our commerce, and oppoſe with their whole weight and ſuperior knowledge of the ſubject, any wild ſchemes which an ignorant or arbitrary legiſlature may attempt to introduce, to the hurt and embarraſſment of our intercourſe both with one another, and with foreigners.

The ſtates of *Venice* and *Holland* have ever been governed by merchants, or at leaſt their policy has ever been under the great influence of that ſort of men. No ſtates have been better ſerved as appears by their great ſucceſs, the eaſe and happineſs of their citizens, as well as the ſtrength and riches of their commonwealth; The one is the oldeſt, and the other the richeſt ſtate in the world of equal number of people---the one has maintained ſundry wars with the

grand

grand Turk---and the other withſtood the whole power of France, and the capitols of both have long been the principal marts of the ſeveral parts of Europe in which they are ſituated, and the banks of both are the beſt ſupported, and in the beſt credit of any banks in Europe, though their countries or territories are very ſmall, and their inhabitants but a handful when compared with the great ſtates in their neighbourhood..----Merchants muſt from the nature of their buſineſs, certainly underſtand the intereſts and reſources of their country, the beſt of any men in it; and I know not of any one reaſon why they ſhould be deemed leſs upright or patriotic, than any other rank of citizens whatever. I therefore humbly propoſe, that if the merchants in the ſeveral ſtates are diſpoſed to ſend delegates from their body, to meet and attend the ſitting of Congreſs: That they ſhall be permitted to form a *chamber* of *commerce* and their advice to Congreſs be demanded and admitted, concerning all bills before Congreſs, as far as the ſame may affect the trade of the ſtates.---I have no idea that the continent is made for Congreſs: I take them to be no more than the upper ſervants of the great political body, who are to find out things by ſtudy and enquiry as other people do; and therefore I think it neceſſary to place them under the beſt poſſible advantages for information, and to re-

quire

quire them to improve all thoſe advantages, to qualify themſelves in the beſt manner poſſible, for the wiſe and uſeful diſcharge of the vaſt truſt and mighty authority repoſed in them; and as I conceive the advice of the merchants to be one of the greateſt ſources of neceſſary information, which is any where placed within their reach, it ought by no means to be neglected, but ſo huſbanded and improved, that the greateſt poſſible advantages may be derived from it:---Beſides this, I have another reaſon why the merchants ought to be conſulted, I take it to be very plain that the huſbandry and manufactures of the country muſt be ruined, if the preſent weight of taxes is continued on them much longer, and of courſe a very great part of our revenue muſt ariſe from impoſts on merchandize, which will fall directly within the merchants ſphere of buſineſs, and of courſe their concurrence and advice will be of the utmoſt conſequence, not only to direct the propereſt mode of levying thoſe duties, but alſo to get them carried into quiet and peaceable execution. No men are more converſant with the citizens, or more intimately connected with their intereſts, than the merchants, and therefore their weight and influence will have a a mighty effect on the minds of the people. I do not recollect an inſtance, in which the court of London ever rejected the remonſtrances and

advices

advices of the merchants, and did not ſuffer ſeverely for their pride. We have ſome ſtriking inſtances of this in the diſregarded advices and remonſtrances of very many Engliſh merchants againſt the American war, and their fears and apprehenſions we ſee verified, almoſt like prophecies, by the event.---I know not why I ſhould continue this argument any longer, or indeed why I have urged it ſo long, inaſmuch as I cannot conceive that Congreſs or any body elſe will deem it below the dignity of the ſupreme power to conſult ſo important an order of men, in matters of the firſt conſequence, which fall immediately under their notice, and in which their experience, and of courſe their knowledge and advice is preferable to that of any other order of men.---Beſides the benefits which Congreſs may receive from this inſtitution, a chamber ofcommerce, compoſed of members from all trading towns in the ſtates, if properly inſtituted and conducted, will produce very many, I might almoſt ſay, innumerable advantages of ſingular utility to all the ſtates--it will give dignity uniformity, and ſafety to our trade, eſtabliſh the credit of the bank---ſecure the confidence of foreign merchants---prove in very many inſtances a fruitful ſource of improvement of our ſtaples and mutual intercourſe---correct many abuſes---pacify diſcontents---unite us in our intereſts, and thereby cement the general union

of

the whole commonwealth--will relieve Congreſs from the pain and trouble of deciding many intricate queſtions of trade which they don't underſtand, by refering them over to this chamber, where they will be diſcuſſed by an order of men, the moſt competent to the buſineſs of any that can be found, and moſt likely to give a deciſion that ſhall be juſt, uſeful and ſatisfactory. It may be objected to all this, that the leſs complex and the more ſimple every conſtitution is, the nearer it comes to perfection: This argument would be very good, and afford a very forcible concluſion, if the government of men was like that of the Almighty, always founded on wiſdom, knowledge and truth; but in the preſent imperfect ſtate of human nature, where the beſt of men know but in part, and muſt recur to advice and information for the reſt, it certainly becomes neceſſary to form a conſtiuution on ſuch principles, as will ſecure that information and advice in the beſt and ſureſt manner poſſible. It may be further objected that the forms herein propoſed, will embarraſs the buſineſs of Congreſs, and make it at beſt ſlow and dilatory. As far as this form will prevent the hurrying a bill through the houſe without due examination, the objection itſelf becomes an advantage---at moſt theſe checks on the ſupreme authority, can have no further effect than to delay or deſtroy a good bill;

but cannot paſs a bad one; and I think it much better in the main, to looſe a good bill than to ſuffer a bad one to paſs into a law.---Beſides it is not to be ſuppoſed, that clear plain caſes will meet with embarraſſment, and 'tis moſt ſafe that untried, doubtful, difficult matters ſhould paſs through the graveſt and fulleſt diſcuſſion, before the ſanction of law is given to them;---but what is to be done if the two houſes grow jealous and ill-natured, and after all their information and advice, grow out of humour and inſincere, and no concurrence can be obtained ---I anſwer, ſit ſtill and do nothing till they get into better humour: I think this much better than to paſs laws in ſuch a temper and ſpirit, as the objection ſuppoſes.---It is however an ill compliment to ſo many grave perſonages, to ſuppoſe them capable of throwing aſide their reaſon, and giving themſelves up like children to the controul of their paſſions; or if this ſhould happen for a moment, that it ſhould continue any length of time, is hardly to be preſumed of a body of men placed in ſuch high ſtations of dignity and importance, with the eyes of all the world upon them---but if they ſhould after all, be capable of this, I think it madneſs to ſet them to making laws, during ſuch fits--- its beſt when they are in no condition to do good, to keep them from doing hurt,---and if they don't grow wiſer in reaſonable time, I

know

know of nothing better than to be aſhamed of our old appointment and make a new one. But what if the country is invaded, or ſome other exigency happens ſo preſſing, that the ſafety of the ſtate requires an immediate reſolution? ---I anſwer what would you do if ſuch a caſe ſhould happen, where there was but one houſe unchecked but equally divided, ſo that a legal vote could not be obtained. The matter is certainly equally difficult and embarraſſed in both caſes: But in the caſe propoſed, I know of no better way than that which the Romans adopted on the like occaſion, viz. that both houſes meet in one chamber and chooſe a dictator, who ſhould have and exerciſe the whole power of both houſes, till ſuch time as they ſhould be able to concur in diſplacing him, and that the whole power of the two houſes ſhould be ſuſpended in the mean time.

I further propoſe, that no grant of money whatever ſhall be made, without an appropriation and that rigid penalties (no matter how great, in my opinion the halter would be mild enough) ſhall be inflicted on any perſon however auguſt his ſtation, who ſhould give order, or vote for the payment, or actually pay one ſhilling of ſuch money to any other purpoſe, than that of its appropriation, and that no order whatever, of any ſuperior in office ſhall juſtify ſuch payment, but every order ſhall expreſs

what funds 'tis drawn upon, and what appropriation 'tis to be charged to, or the order ſhall not be paid :---This kind of embezzlement is of ſo fatal a nature, that no meaſures or bounds are to be obſerved in curing it, when miniſters will ſet forth the moſt ſpecious and neceſſary occaſions for money, and induce the people to pay it in full tale; and when they have gotten poſſeſſion of it, to neglect the great objects for which it was given, and pay it, ſometimes ſquander it away for different purpoſes, oftentimes for uſeleſs, yea hurtful ones, yea often even to bribe and corrupt the very officers of government, to betray their truſt, and contaminate the ſtate, even in its public offices---to force people to buy their own deſtruction, and pay for it with their hard labor--the very ſweat of their brow, is a crime of ſo high a nature, that I know not any gibbet too cruel for ſuch offenders.

I would further propoſe, that the aforeſaid great miniſters of ſtate, ſhall compoſe a council of ſtate, to whoſe number Congreſs may add three others, viz. one from New-England, one from the middle ſtates, and one for the ſouthern ſtates, one of which to be appointed preſident by Congreſs;---to all of whom ſhall be committed the ſupreme executive authority of the ſtates, (all and ſingular of them ever accountable to Congreſs,) who ſhall ſuperintend all the executive departments, and appoint all executive

executive officers, who ſhall ever be accountable to and removeable for juſt cauſe, by them or Congreſs, i. e. either of them.

I propoſe further, that the powers of Congreſs, and all the other departments acting under them, ſhall all be reſtricted to ſuch matters of general neceſſity and utility to all the ſtates only, as cannot come within the juriſdiction of any particular ſtate, or to which the authority of any particular ſtate is not competent; ſo that each particular ſtate ſhall enjoy its ſovereignty and ſupreme authority to all intents and purpoſes, excepting only thoſe high authorities and powers by them delegated to Congreſs, for the purpoſes of the general union.

There remains one very important article ſtill to be diſcuſſed, viz. what methods the conſtitution ſhall point out, to enforce the acts and requiſitions of Congreſs, through the ſeveral ſtates; and how the ſtates which refuſe or delay obedience to ſuch acts or requiſitions ſhall be treated: This I know is a particular of the greateſt delicacy, as well as of the utmoſt importance, and therefore, I think, ought to be decidedly ſettled by the conſtitution, in our cooleſt hours, whilſt no paſſions or prejudices exiſt, which may be exited by the great intereſts, or ſtrong circumſtances of any particular caſe which may happen. I know that ſupreme authorities are liable to err, as well as ſubordinate

ones.

ones. I know that courts may be in the wrong as well as the people; ſuch is the imperfect ſtate of human nature, in all ranks and degrees of men; but we muſt take human nature as it is, it cannot be mended. and we are compelled, both by wiſdom and neceſſity, to adopt ſuch methods as promiſe the greateſt attainable good, though perhaps not the greateſt poſſible, and ſuch as are liable to the feweſt inconveniencies, though not altogether free of them. This is a queſtion of ſuch magnitude, that I think it neceſſary to premiſe the great natural principles on which its deciſion ought to depend.---In the preſent ſtate of human nature, all human life is a life of chances; 'tis impoſſible to make any intereſt ſo certain, but there will be a chance againſt it, and we are in all caſes obliged to adopt a chance againſt us, in order to bring ourſelves within the benefit of a greater chance in our favour, and that calculation of chances which is grounded on the great natural principles of truth and fitneſs, is of all others the moſt likely to come out right.

1. *No laws of any ſtate whatever, which do not carry in them a force which extends to their effectual and final execution, can afford a certain or ſufficient ſecurity to the ſubject:* This is too plain to need any proof.

2. *Laws or ordinances of any kind, (eſpecially of auguſt bodies of high dignity and conſequence,) which fail*

*fail of execution, are much worſe than none*; they weaken the government; expoſe it to contempt; deſtroy the confidence of all men, natives and foreigners in it, and expoſe both aggregate bodies and individuals, who have placed confidence in it, to many ruinous diſappointments, which they would have eſcaped, had no law or ordinance been made: Therefore,

3. To appoint a Congreſs with powers to do all acts neceſſary for the ſupport and uſes of the union; and at the ſame time to leave all the ſtates at liberty to obey them or not with impunity, is in every view, the groſſeſt abſurdity, worſe than a ſtate of nature, without any ſupreme authority at all, and at beſt a ridiculous effort of childiſh nonſenſe: And of courſe,

4. Every ſtate in the union is under the higheſt obligations to obey the ſupreme authority of the whole, and in the higheſt degree amenable to it, and ſubject to the higheſt cenſure for diſobedience.---Yet all this notwithſtanding, I think the ſoul that ſins ſhould die, i. e. the cenſure of the great ſupreme power, ought to be ſo directed, if poſſible, as to light on thoſe perſons, who have betrayed their country, and expoſed it to diſſolution, by oppoſing and rejecting that ſupreme authority, which is the band of our union, and from whence proceeds the principle ſtrength and energy of our government. I therefore propoſe, that every

every perſon whatever, whether in public or private character, who ſhall by public vote or other overt act, diſobey the ſupreme authority, ſhall be amenable to Congreſs, ſhall be ſummoned and compelled to appear before Congreſs, and on due conviction, ſuffer ſuch fine, impriſonment or other puniſhment, as the ſupreme authority ſhall judge requiſite. It may be objected here, that this will make a member of aſſembly accountable to Congreſs for his vote in aſſembly; I anſwer, it does ſo, *in this only caſe*, viz. when that vote is to diſobey the ſupreme authority; No member of aſſembly can have right to give ſuch a vote, and therefore ought to be puniſhed for ſo doing---When the ſupreme authority is diſobeyed, the government muſt looſe its energy and effect, and of courſe the empire muſt be ſhaken to its very foundation. A government which is but half executed, or whoſe operations may all be ſtopped by a ſingle vote, is the moſt dangerous of all inſtitutions.--See the preſent *Poland* and ancient *Greece*, buried in ruins, in conſequence of this fatal error in their policy. A government which has not energy and effect, can never afford a protection or ſecurity to its ſubjects, i. e. muſt ever be ineffectual to its own ends.

I cannot therefore admit, that the great ends of our union ſhould lie at the mercy of a ſingle ſtate, or that the energy of our government

ſhould

ſhould be checked by a ſingle diſobedience, or that ſuch diſobedience ſhould ever be ſheltered from cenſure and puniſhment; the conſequence is too capital, too fatal to be admitted. Even though I know very well that a ſupreme authority with all its dignity and importance, is ſubject to paſſions like other leſſer powers, they may be and often are heated, violent, oppreſſive, and very tyrannical; yet I know alſo, that perfection is not to be hoped for in this life, and we muſt take all inſtitutions with their natural defects, or reject them altogether: I will guard againſt theſe abuſes of power as far as poſſible, but I cannot give up all government or deſtroy its neceſſary energy for fear of theſe abuſes. But to fence them out as far as poſſible, and to give the ſtates as great a check, on the ſupreme authority as can conſiſt with its neceſſary energy and effect, I propoſe that any ſtate may petition Congreſs to repeal any law or deciſion which they have made, and if more than half the ſtates do this, the law or deciſion ſhall be repealed, let its nature or importance be however great, excepting only ſuch acts as create funds for the public credit, which ſhall never be repealed till their end is effected, or other funds equally effectual are ſubſtituted in their places; but Congreſs ſhall not be obliged to repeal any of theſe acts, ſo petitioned againſt, till they have time to lay the reaſons of ſuch acts

before ſuch petitioning ſtates, and to receive their anſwer; becauſe ſuch petitions may ariſe from ſudden heats, popular prejudices, or the publication of matters falſe in fact, and may require time and means of cool reflection and the fulleſt information, before the final deciſion is made: But if after all, more than half the ſtates perſiſt in their demand of a repeal, it ſhall take place.---The reaſon is, the uneaſineſs of a majority of ſtates affords a ſtrong preſumption that the act is wrong, for uneaſineſs ariſes much more frequently from wrong than right; but if the act was good and right, it would ſtill be better to repeal and looſe it, than to force the execution of it againſt the opinion of a major part of the ſtates; and laſtly, if every act of Congreſs is ſubject to this repeal, Congreſs itſelf will have ſtronger inducement not only to examine well the ſeveral acts under their conſideration, but alſo to communicate the reaſons of them to the ſtates, than they would have, if their ſimple vote gave the final ſtamp of irrevocable authority to their acts.

Further I propoſe, that if the execution of any act or order of the ſupreme authority ſhall be oppoſed by force in any of the ſtates, which God forbid! it ſhall be lawful for Congreſs to ſend into ſuch ſtate a ſufficient force to ſuppreſs it.---On the whole, I take it that the very exiſtence and uſe of our union, eſſentially depends

depends on the full energy and final effect of the laws made to ſupport it; and therefore I ſacrifice all other conſiderations to this energy and effect, and if our union is not worth this purchaſe, we muſt give it up---the nature of the thing does not admit any other alternative. I do contend that our union is worth this purchaſe---*with it*, every individual reſts ſecure under its protection, againſt foreign or domeſtic inſult and oppreſſion---*without it*, we can have no ſecurity againſt the oppreſſion, inſult and invaſion of foreign powers, not any ſingle ſtate is of importance enough to be an object of treaty with them, or if it was, could it bear the expence of ſuch treaties, or ſupport any character or reſpect in a diſſevered ſtate: We ſhall looſe all reſpectability among the nations abroad. We have a very extenſive trade which can't be carried on with ſecurity and advantage, without treaties of commerce and alliance with foreign nations. We have an extenſive weſtern territory which can't be defended againſt the invaſion of foreign nations, bordering on our frontiers, who will cover it with their own inhabitants, and we ſhall looſe it forever, and our extent of Empire be thereby reſtrained; and what is worſe, their numerous poſterity will in future time drive ours into the ſea, as the *Goths* and *Vandals* formerly conquered the Romans in like circumſtances, unleſs we have the force

of

of the union to repel ſuch invaſions. We have without the union, no ſecurity againſt the inroads and wars of one ſtate upon another, by which our wealth and ſtrength, as well as eaſe and comfort, will be devoured by enemies growing out of our own bowels. I conclude then, that the union is not only of the moſt eſſential conſequence to the well-being of the ſtates in general, but to that of every individual citizen of them, and of courſe ought to be ſupported, and made as uſeful and ſafe as poſſible, by a conſtitution which admits that full energy and final effect of government which alone can ſecure its great ends and uſes.

In a diſſertation of this ſort, I would not wiſh to deſcend to minutiæ, yet there are ſome ſmall matters which have important conſequences, and therefore ought to be noticed. 'Tis neceſſary that Congreſs ſhould have all uſual and neceſſary powers of ſelf preſervation and order, e. g. to impriſon for contempt, inſult, or interruption, &c. and to expel their own members for due cauſes, among which I would rank that of non-attendance on the houſe, or partial attendance without ſuch excuſe as ſhall ſatisfy the houſe. Where there is ſuch a vaſt authority and truſt devolved on Congreſs, and the grand and moſt important intereſts of the Empire reſt on their deciſions, it appears to me highly unreaſonable that we ſhould ſuffer their auguſt conſultations to be

ſuſpended,

ſuſpended, or their dignity, authority and influence leſſened by the idleneſs, neglect and non-attendance of its members, for we know that the acts of a thin houſe do not uſually carry with them the ſame degree of weight and reſpect as thoſe of a full houſe; beſides I think, when a man is deputed a delegate in Congreſs, and has undertaken the buſineſs, the whole Empire becomes of courſe poſſeſſed of a right to his beſt and conſtant ſervices, which if any member refuſes or neglects, the Empire is injured and ought to reſent the injury, at leaſt ſo far as to expel and ſend him home, that ſo his place may be better ſupplied.

I have one argument in favour of my whole plan, viz, 'tis ſo formed that no men of dull intellects, or ſmall knowledge, or of habits too idle for conſtant attendance, or cloſe and ſteady attention. can do the buſineſs with any tollerable degree of reſpectability, nor can they find either honor, profit or ſatisfaction in being there, and of courſe, I could wiſh that the choice of the electors might never fall on ſuch a man, or if it ſhould, that he might have ſenſe enough (of pain at leaſt, if not of ſhame) to decline his acceptance; for after all that can be done, I don't think that a good adminiſtration depends wholly on a good conſtitution and good laws, for inſufficient or bad men will always make bad work, and a bad adminiſtration, let the conſtitution

conſtitution and laws be ever ſo good; the management of able, faithful and upright men alone, can cauſe an adminiſtration to brighten, and the dignity and wiſdom of an Empire to riſe into reſpect; make truth the line and meaſure of public deciſions; give weight and authority to the government, and ſecurity and peace to the ſubject.

We now hope that we are on the cloſe of a war of mighty effort and great diſtreſs, againſt the greateſt power on earth, whet into the moſt keen reſentment, and ſavage fierceneſs, which can be excited by wounded pride, and which uſually riſes higher between brother and brother offended, than between ſtrangers in conteſt. Twelve of the thirteen United States have felt the actual and cruel invaſions of the enemy, and eleven of our capitals have been under their power firſt, or laſt, during the dreadful conflict; but a good Providence, our own virtue and firmneſs, and the help of our friends, have enabled us to riſe ſuperior to all the power of our adverſaries, and made them ſeek to be at peace with us.

During the extreme preſſures of the war, indeed many errors in our adminiſtration have been committed, when we could not have experience and time for reflection, to make us wiſe; but theſe will eaſily be excuſed, forgiven and forgotten, if we can now while at leiſure, find virtue, wiſdom and foreſight enough to correct them,

them, and form ſuch eſtabliſhments, as ſhall ſecure the great ends of our union, and give dignity, force, utility and permanency to our Empire. 'Tis a pity we ſhould looſe the honor and bleſſings which have coſt us ſo dear, for want of that wiſdom and firmneſs in meaſures, which are eſſential to our preſervation. 'Tis now at our option, either to fall back into our original atoms, or form ſuch an union, as ſhall command the reſpect of the world, and give honor and ſecurity to all our people.

This vaſt ſubject lies with mighty weight on my mind, and I have beſtowed on it my utmoſt attention, and here offer the public the beſt thoughts and ſentiments I am maſter of. I have confined myſelf in this diſſertation, intirely to the nature, reaſon and truth of my ſubject, without once adverting to the reception it might meet with from men of different prejudices or intereſts. To find the truth, not to carry a point has been my object. I have not the vanity to imagine that my ſentiments may be adopted; I ſhall have all the reward I wiſh or expect----if my diſſertation ſhall throw any light on the great ſubject, ſhall excite an emulation of enquiry, and animate ſome abler genius to form a plan of greater perfection, leſs objectionable and more uſeful.

*Philadelphia, February* 16, 1783.

9 JU 64